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CIHA and Globalization

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I am honoured to have been invited by your President Roberto Conduru to the annual meeting of the Brazilian art historians to discuss the role of the International Committee of the History of Art (CIHA) in the globalization of art history, and to examine what has happened in the years following the 32nd International Congress in the History of Art held at Melbourne in January 2008.

Many of you may know that CIHA is the oldest international organization of art history in the world, and since its inception at Vienna in 1873 has been pre-eminently concerned with an agenda for globalization in various ways. From 1873 CIHA held quadrennial congresses –known colloquially as the art history Olympics that represent the state of art history throughout the world, which were and are open to all nationalities. Well before it became fashionable CIHA was global, and the concerns of CIHA remain global in a very special way. The publications of these early congresses are basically European in their outlook, revealing that art history was a western discipline. The last congress at Melbourne in was: *Crossing Cultures, Conflict, Migration and Convergence*. As the convenor of the International Congress, I chose a theme that was of local significance but also related to international politics. The strength of CIHA is that it encourages multiple views and perspectives that could never be achieved in a single authored book. Much of the success of the congress was due to its location, to the fact that it took place in a country that was south of the equator, a country that has many nationalities in it.

Until the 1960's global art history was always seen in a Eurocentric or Euroamerican fashion. There was Europe and the rest of the world that somehow was dependent on EuroAmerica in one way or another. The two congresses that attempted to change this were those convened by Irving Lavin, *World Art: Themes of Unity in Diversity*¹ and Thomas Gaehtgens, *Artistic Exchange*², Berlin 1991. But the geographical location of a CIHA congress south of the equator in Melbourne with a concept that was more southern than northern enticed many countries to participate for the first time. Since then the ambitions of CIHA to become global have developed in a special way.

As President of CIHA I have asked myself what will art history be in ten, twenty, fifty or a hundred year's time? What strategic role should CIHA play in national and international developments? What is art history in different countries? Is it always a European practice? What makes art history authoritative in western and non-western locations? How, why and who answers the ques-

1 *World Art: Themes of Unity in Diversity*, Acts of the 27th International Congress of Art, edited by Irving Lavin, Pennsylvania State University Press, 1989.

2 *Artistic Exchange*, Acts of the 28th International Congress, edited by Thomas W. Gaehtgens, Berlin, 1992.

tion of what is art history? Are there alternatives to art history? How can we translate artistic experience into different languages? How can we have dialogues with different audiences and in diverse languages? What roles should translation play? Who has made art history and who will make art history? Between the global and the local whose art history is it? For the next international congress at Nuremberg, *The Challenge of the Object*, in June 2012, I will chair a session with Thomas Gaetgens on 'CIHA as the object of Art History' where we will confront these questions and I invite you to submit proposals that will create new forms of art history.

Globalization is not a research project that I would have personally chosen, but is something that I have engaged with as a consequence of my presidency of the International Committee of Art (CIHA). In Melbourne, 700 art historians participated from 50 countries. Despite the fact that Australia is a long way from the rest of the world, the call for papers resulted in a truly global expression of the subject, the concept enticing many contributions from countries south of the equator, notably papers of considerable quality from Latin America. In the publication, some, 220 papers are published by art historians from 25 countries. It is not my intention to review the publication in its entirety but the quality and significance of contributions from Latin America is considerable. In the session entitled: *Global Modern Art: The World Inside Out and Upside Down*, chaired by Anthony White from the University of Melbourne and Andrea Giunta, now at Texas, In their introduction the authors explicitly aimed to present an alternative history of twentieth century art to that furnished by twenty first century international scholarship. They particularly focused on the practice and reception of modern art in countries lying south of the equator. Were there enduring traditions of modernism in Argentina, Brazil, Australia and New Zealand? Contributions from the University of Buenos Aires by Laura Malosetti Costa, and by Isabel Planta, the paper by Maria de Fátima Morethy Couto, from the University of Campinas, as well as from other scholars made the section on modernism visually and intellectually unlike anything before. No other art history book has shown such a variety of subjects within the covers of one book that demonstrate a global argument. One of the strengths of CIHA was and is that it has the potential to have such a global approach.

Presidents of CIHA come and go. Their office is for four years. It is the French Secretary and the Swiss Treasurer who administer the organization. In my presidency I have had significant support from two remarkable colleagues in these roles, Thierry Dufrêne and Peter Schneemann, both of whom have an expertise in contemporary art. Something of the genial collaboration I have had with them is shown in this photograph of my two colleagues in the back of a taxi at Mexico City for a colloquium organized by Peter Krieger. Until recently Peter Krieger has been the only member of the Bureau who has informed us about Latin America. One of my aims as President has been to construct a system whereby all parts of the world are represented on our central executive, the Bureau. In an interim solution, we have elected Roberto Conduro as an observer to the Bureau and at the Nuremberg Congress and we hope to have an elected representative from Latin America formally made a member of our Bureau., to

assist us with such an important constituency of world art history. We have also invited as observers, representatives from the People's Republic of China, and from Africa, Professor Lao Zhu from Beijing, and Professor Federico Freschi from Johannesburg. Although this may seem a very obvious step forward it has only been achieved recently in order to attempt to represent all the worlds of art history on a central committee.

The documentation of CIHA and our meetings is something that we would like to achieve. Thierry Dufrêne maintains the archive, and I am preparing a publication that is a visual analysis of the practice of global art history. For me CIHA has been an enormously stimulating experience. It has allowed me to take part of events like a seminar on the connoisseurship of silk painting from the thirteenth century, held at Kyoto in June 2008, which is a subject I would know nothing about were it not for the CIHA experience. There have been many other life enhancing experiences including this trip to Latin America.

What remains about CIHA in the country that holds the conference? In Melbourne my University has encouraged the initiative to create an Institute of Art History for advanced research. We have created a website, have held a series of strategic conferences on Curatorship, the Art Market, Architectural Historiography, Contemporaneity, and Art Historiography, to demonstrate the strategic necessity for such an institution. We are now creating an endowment.

It is our intention to develop an association of art history institutes south of the equator, provisionally entitled APIAH, the Asian Pacific Institutes of Art History. In Europe there is the existence of RIHA, and in America ARIAH, and we would like to create an equivalent institution south of the equator. I would welcome comments in the discussion about this initiative. I believe that if the agenda for international art history is set by an organization within Euroamerica then there will be inevitably only international developments that favour the creation of Eurocentric canons, that purport to integrate other cultures, but already the selection process is determined by Euroamerican values and experience.

Apart from the four yearly congresses, CIHA's role has been to stimulate international meetings of art historians, with more frequent annual colloquia, held in different countries throughout the globe, and to publish the proceedings as a record of the state of art history. Some 34 countries belong to CIHA and the number is increasing. Representatives from local national committees constitute the General Assembly, and we will have general assemblies at two of our colloquia in 2011 at Johannesburg and South Africa.

A smaller executive, called the Bureau, is responsible for the direction of colloquia. At this conference we have Federico Freschi, who is the convener of the first CIHA art history colloquium, *Other Views: Art History in (South) Africa and the Global South*, 12-15 January 2011. This is a highly significant colloquium for it is the first time that CIHA will hold a meeting in Africa.

Later in the year Marjeta Ciglenečki, (*Art And Architecture Around 1100, Global And Regional Perspectives*, Maribor, 10-14 May 2011), will convene a congress that is about mediaeval central Europe. Slovenia has had a challenging political history in recent decades, and important monuments are not well known or studied. The intention of our Slovenian colleagues is to create new

art history departments, one at Maribor, and to create an international interest in their heritage. They enter the CIHA arena to make known what is local in a global arena.

Also next year a colloquium has been devised by Marzia Faietti, head of prints and drawings at the Uffizi, Florene, and Gerhard Wolf, director of the Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florence. The call for papers was on the website of the Kunsthistorisches Institut and we await the program. The colloquium is planned to coincide with the conclusion of an extraordinarily successful exhibition of Italian drawing from the British Museum and the Uffizi, which has been held in both museums. The theme of the conference is *Lines between drawing and writing*, and in the lengthy call for papers, only a part of which is reproduced here, the excitement global potential is defined:

'The conference will discuss the differences, similarities and open borders between writing and drawing, their techniques and aesthetics, especially in European, Islamic and East Asian cultures. Given that lines play an important but not exclusive role in this relationship, papers could discuss the limits of linear systems or explore alternative models as for example the transition between line, brush stroke, mark or spot. The major aim of the conference is to envisage a dialogue among specialists of different cultures and academic fields, questioning the role of lines in an intercultural perspective, from an historical as well as theoretical point of view.'

One of the major strategic issues for a President of CIHA and the Bureau is where should the next CIHA congresses be held. Latin America has often been considered, but we have never received a serious bid. The growth and vitality of Brazilian art history which is demonstrated in this conference suggests that we could hope in the future to have a major conference in Latin America. Colleagues from the People's Republic of China participated in the Melbourne congress as shown in the publication. Last month I was in China for the preparation of their bid for the congress in 2016. At my suggestion they held a colloquium on the subject of 'Art Curatorship in the East and the West' at the National Museum of China, and at presented a joint program for 2016 between the National Academy of Fine Arts, the National Museum of China and Peking University, with three convenors and impressive resources. Our Chinese colleagues will present their bid at the Nuremberg Congress in 2016.

To conclude my short presentation I should like to examine some aspects of global art history that are about the phenomenon of artists who travel between countries, whose work has in the past resisted analysis because of their peripatetic careers and because their legacy is fragmented internationally. Today given the aesthetic of globalisation that dominates our experience, these artists who move between countries are not problematic. We are now all fascinated by biennales. Perhaps some of you are writing books on the subject. As a Venetian scholar, I find that the oldest and most successful model for a Biennale is the Venetian one, which has the well known system of national pavilions, in ever increasing numbers as the Venetians appropriate more of the Aresenale area to create new spaces. The Venice Biennale has endured for more than a century and

is accompanied by related, and equally successful biennales of theatre, film, and architecture.

At the recent 17th Sydney Biennale selected by David Elliott, *The Beauty of Distance. Songs of Survival in a Precarious Age*, Kader Attia presents an installation piece, from wood, corrugated iron, tv antennas, satellite dishes, found materials, entitled *Kasbah*, 2010. He was born to Algerian parents in 1970 at Dugny, Paris, and now lives and works in Berlin. His work is on the one hand presented as a local image of a shanty town in South Africa, but at the same time has a global affinity with other shanty towns, like the *favelle* in Rio. Kader Attia is characteristic of an artist of the twenty first century.

Other Biennales can be less successful such as the current Beijing Biennale, that in many spaces resemble a fifties installation, a reminder that international art fairs may be limited in terms of patronage and reach. One invited exhibit within the Beijing Biennale was conceived by two curators from the National Museum of Fine Arts, at Santiago, Chile, Patrizio M. Zárate and Karin Zimmer: *Inhabiting Biodiversity: The Special Exhibition of Contemporary Art of Chile*. The twelve artists represented were responding to the theme of the Biennale but more significantly to the earthquake on February 27th 2010.

What concerns me are the ancestors of these artists, travellers who moved between countries, and whose careers are partially documented on one continent of another, but rarely presented as a project. On Thursday my colleague Mary Eagle will present in this conference on Augustus Earle, a painter and lithographer born in London of American parents in 1793. He is a travelling artist who moves between continents, and especially between Latin America, Britain and Australia, and whose works are widely dispersed. Between 1815-17 Earle travelled and painted extensively in the Mediterranean and in 1818 he set sail for North America. In 1820, he visited Chile, Lima and Rio de Janeiro, where he settled until 1824. In 1824 Earle set sail aboard the 'Duke of Gloucester' for Calcutta, via the Cape of Good Hope. Unfortunately however the ship was forced to berth temporarily at the remote island of Tristan da Cunha, in the south Atlantic ocean, and Earle was accidentally abandoned on shore.

Earle remained on Tristan da Cunha for eight months, from January - November 1824, accompanied only by its six adult inhabitants and his dog 'Trim'. While on the island Earle painted a number of images detailing its barren landscape and inclement weather conditions with considerable accuracy, until eventually running out of materials. He noted in his diary of the island's black volcanic rocks, 'All the rocks on the island are of the same dismal hue, which gives a most melancholy aspect to all its scenery'. Of the island's misty summit, depicted in *Tristan da Cunha 1824*, he also noted: 'The sterile and cindery peak, with its venerable head, partly capped with clouds, partly revealing patches of red cinders, or lava, intermingled with the black rock, produced a most extraordinary and dismal effect. It seemed as though it were still actually burning, to heighten the sublimity of the scene'.

Earle accompanied HMS 'Beagle' in 1832 as its resident artist. Accompanied by naturalist Charles Darwin, the voyage's aim was to survey the southern coast of America, including Tierra del Fuego. Upon reaching Rio de Janeiro

in April 1832, however, ill health forced Earle to resign from his post and return to London. It is not my intention to recount any more of Earle's career than this, but to ask for information about him, to know if your museums contain works by him, or other documentation. Mary Eagle's project is financed by the Australian Research Council and will have significant outcomes, including a monograph and an exhibition.

We have also a related project about the Swiss born artist Louis Bouvelot who lived for a considerable amount of time in Rio, and ended his life in Australia. His life is characteristic of many artists, who well before the aesthetic of globalization moved between different countries. We know that there are holdings of Buvelot's work in Latin American collections, especially in Brazil and would be grateful for any information for these research projects. We are looking for collaborators to create an aesthetic of globalization for nineteenth century traveler artists between Australia and Brazil.

I shall now conclude by looking at one of the new forms of signification that emerge with what we have called cross cultural art history in Australia as exemplified by the recent exhibition of the work of Emily Kame Kngwarreye in Japan in 2008. In February 2008, the largest solo exhibition by an Australian artist ever to travel abroad was shown at the National Museum of Art, Osaka (26 February to 13 April), and the National Art Centre, Tokyo (28 May to 28 July), and subsequently at the National Museum of Australia, Canberra. Two hundred works chosen by Akira Tatehata, Director at Osaka, were shown in the most successful blockbuster ever held in Japan, with 134,000 visitors over two months. Emily's exhibition had a greater visitation than the exhibition on Italian marriage and sexuality which had as its centre piece, Titian's *Venus of Urbino*, from the Uffizi, Florence, held at the same time in the same city. A documentary by Andrew Pike, *Emily in Japan. The Making of an Exhibition*, 2008, explores the synergies experienced by Japanese visitors of all ages with Aboriginal spirituality, and how Emily's imagery translated into Japanese signification. As in Aboriginal art there is no distinction between art and craft in Japan. The emotional response was independent of the Indigenous context. The Japanese were fascinated with the story of a female camel driver, who became an international celebrity in the last decade of her life. It was an exhibition that inspired a primordial response to Emily, from respect for her age, a love of brilliance in her paintings, and admiration for the rituals that were associated with her creations.

If Australia's presidency of CIHA has resulted in one thing I hope that it would be a changing of values that give authority to countries outside the conventional paradigms of Euro American traditions.